

Message Text

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21/42

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 USSS-00 OC-05 CCO-00 SCCT-01

OMB-01 SCS-03 SCA-01 AID-05 IO-10 /097 W

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O R 181735Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6263

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USUN NEW YORK 2953

USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 11688

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDEE ADDED)

GENEVA FOR SAUNDERS

DAMASCUS PLEASE SHOW AMBASSADOR GODLEY

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LE

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SUBJECT: INTERIOR MINISTER CHAMOUN SAYS HE IS PREPARED USE ARMY

TOMMORROW

1. INTERIOR MINISTER CHAMOUN RETURNED MY CALL RIGHT AFTER MEETING OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH PRESIDENT FRANGIE IN BAABDA LATE THIS AFTERNOON (SEPT 18) MEETING TOOK PLACE IN ABSENCE PRIME MINISTER KARAME WHO REMAINING IN TOWN CONTINUINUING HIS EFFORTS AT CONCILIATION TO END FIGHTING IN BEIRUT CHAMOUN SAID CABINET HAS INFORMED KARAME THAT THEY ARE GIVING HIM TONIGHT TO TRY TO SOLVE THIS CRISIS BY HIS CONCILIATORY METHODS. IF HEAVY NIGHT OF FIGHTING CONTINUES, CHAMOUN TOLD US HE HAS AGREEMENT OF THOSE PRESENT AT THE MEETING (PRESIDENT FRANGIE, SHI'ITE OSSEIRAN, DRUZE ARSLAN, GREEK ORTHODOX TURINI) TO CALL IN THE ARMY.

2. CHAMOUN SAID HE HAS LITTLE EXPECTATION THAT CONCILIATION EFFORT WILL WORK. ARMY HAS ITS PLANS FOR INTERVENTION AND CHAMOUN INTENDS TO ORDER THIS INTERVENTION EARLY IN THE MORNING IF CAPITAL HAS NOT QUIETED BY THEN. HE SAID AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR HE HAS FULL AUTHORITY TO DO THIS. I ASKED HIM WHETHER THIS WOULD BOT BRING IN PALESTINIAN MILITARY IN A BIG WAY. CHAMOUN SHRUGGED THIS OFF SAYING PALESTINIANS ARE ALREADY INVOLVED UPON FUMRTHET QUESTIONING, HE ASSERTED THAT ARAFAT FORCES (FATAH) HAVE BEEN INVOLVED SINCE YESTERDAY ALONG WITH REJECTION FRONT PALESTINIANS AND VARIOUS LEFT WINGERS INCLUDING COMMUNISTS. HE SAID SAJQA IS BEING MORE MODERATE THOUGH HE COULD NOT TRUST THEM.

3. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION ON THE ATTITUDE OF SYRIA, CHAMOUN SAID FRANGIE AND ASSAD HAVE SPOKEN BY TELEPHONE TODAY AND ASSAD'S ATTITUDE WAS "QUITE GOOD". HE SPECIFIED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE SYRIANS WOULD INTERVENE AGAINST THE PRESIDENT AND GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON.

4. INTERESTINGLY, CHAMOUN LISTED HIS OWN LEBERAL PARTY ALONGSIDE PHALANGE AND "LARGE SECTIONS OF THE POPULATION" AS OPPOSING THE LEFT WING ELEMENTS. HE IMMEDIATLEY AGREED TO THE SUGGESTION THAT INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES COULD ALSO PROBABLY BE COUNTED ON THAT SIDE.

5. I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONTACT KARAME OR ANY OF HIS
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POLITICAL ALLIES (E.G. SAEB DALAAM OR RAYMOND EDDE) SINCE TALKING WITH CHAMOUN AD ASSUME THEY ARE DEEP IN THEIR CONCILIATION EFFORTS HOWEVER, FIGHTING CONTINUES IN MANY SECTORS OF BEIRUT WITH NO SIGN OF AN EARLY CEASEFORE. THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO WARN PEOPLE TO STAY OFF THE STREETS.

6. WE HAVE BEEN TELLING ALL AMERICANS TO STAY HOME TONIGHT AND A NUMBER OF EMBASSY EMPLOYEES WHO LIVE IN TROUBLED NEIGHBORHOODS

IN THE CITY HAVE DOUBLED UP WITH FRIENDS IN QUIETER SECTIONS.

7. COMMENT: IF CHAMOUN IS TO BE TAKEN STRAIGHT (AND I THINK HE PROBABLY IS), THERE IS VERY GOOD CHANCE MORNING WILL SEE INTERVENTION BY ARMY AT COMMAND OF MINISTER OF INTERIOR BACKED BY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC BUT AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE PRIME MINISTER WHO IS ALSO MINISTER OF DEFENSE. WHILE THERE IS A SHI'ITE AND A DRUZE MINISTER ASSOCIATED WITH THIS DECISION, LINE UP OF FORCES WILL LEAD INESCAPABLY TO CONCLUSION THAT CHRISTIANS HAVE LINED UP WITH RIGHT WING AND MAJORITY OF MOSLEMS WITH THE LEFT. THIS WILL BE INSERTING DANGEROUS NEWPOLITICAL IMAGERY WHICH UNDERCUTS IMAGE OF JOINT MOSLEM-CHRISTIAN MODERATION BUILT UP THROUGH CHAMOUN'S COOPERATION WITH KARAME OVER PAST FEW WEEKS. IT WILL THREATEN TO BRING DIRECT ARMY CONFRONTATION WITH POWER FULLY ARMED ELEMENTS OF THE LEFT, INCLUDING PALESTINIANS. LAMBRAKIS

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